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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/646,115	08/22/2003	William A. Bernard	LCB378-CON-2	8907

32915 7590 09/23/2004

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EXAMINER

WOOD, KIMBERLY T

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3632

DATE MAILED: 09/23/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/646,115

Applicant(s)

BERNARD ET AL.

Examiner

Kimberly T. Wood

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 June 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 39-64 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 39-48, 51-55 and 57-64 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 49, 50, and 56 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

This is an office action for serial number 10/646,115,
entitled Cable Duct Coupler, filed on August 22, 2003.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs
of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under
this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or
a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one
year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 39-48, 51-54, and 57-64 are rejected, as best
understood, under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by
Henneberger 5,316,243. Henneberger discloses a cable duct
coupler comprising a first duct-receiving portion (22) and a
second duct-receiving portion (24), a releasable automatic
locking mechanism (61) including a plurality of barb (each
spring 61 individually comprises an arm and edge) each having at
least one arm including a knife-blade edge/serrated edge (66)
bitingly engaging a respective duct section (column 4, lines
4ff), the locking mechanism/barbs are in an unstressed state
prior to insertion of the cable duct sections and are mounted on
a barb mount portion on the cable duct coupler (column 3, lines
63ff). Henneberger discloses a mechanism/barb in a closed

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position (when the barb is biting into the first cable duct section) and an open position (when ends are bent back to permit a leading end of the cable duct section into the space, see column 3, lines 56ff).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 55 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Henneberger 5,316,243 in further view of Gute 5,338,083. Patent No. 605 in view of Patent No. 458 discloses all of the limitations of the claimed invention except for the flange. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have modified Henneberger to have included the flange as taught by Gute for the purpose of providing stability and strength.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed June 17, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's arguments that Henneberger does not disclose a "releasable automatic locking mechanism" the examiner would like to point out that the springs 61 could release the cable duct given a certain amount of force applied to the fitting or trough as suggested by the applicant (page 11 of remarks). The springs 61 could be pushed back by hand/finger of the user to remove the springs locking/biting action on the trough or fitting. The examiner as well as applicant have proven that the springs 61 can be released from its locked state since it is known that the resilience of the spring allows for flexing or bending to allow the spring to move from one position (locked) to another (unlocked) without causing damage to the springs.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 49, 50, and 56 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

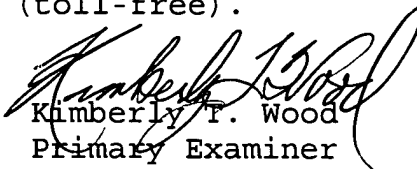
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kimberly T. Wood whose telephone number is 703-308-0539. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 7:30am to 5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Leslie Braun can be reached on 703-308-2156. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Kimberly T. Wood
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3632

September 19, 2004